

# Marine Life Protection Act Implementation Update

Updated May 8, 2008

Over the past year significant advances have been made towards the successful implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the development of a cohesive statewide network of marine protected areas (MPAs). Implementation has been split into five separate study regions and is now a public-private partnership commonly referred to as the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPA-Initiative). As outlined below the first of these five study regions has been completed, the second study region is nearing completion, and the start of the third study region is on track for beginning the planning process in summer 2008. The network as a whole is scheduled to be completed around 2011. The following are dates for recent milestones in the implementation of the MLPA.

## **Central Coast Study Region (CCSR):**

- *December 21, 2006:* As the first of the five MLPA study regions, the central coast study region (CCSR) which extends from Pigeon Point south to Point Conception, neared its planning completion the Secretary for Resources announced the commencement of the second phase of the MLPA-Initiative in the North Central Study Region (NCCSR) which extends from Alder Creek/Point Arena south to Pigeon Point.
- *April 13, 2007:* After multiple public meetings and hundreds of public comments, the California Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to adopt its preferred alternative of MPAs for the CCSR. The 29 adopted MPAs cover approximately 204 mi<sup>2</sup> (approximately 18%) of state waters within the study region. Of those 204 mi<sup>2</sup> approximately 85 mi<sup>2</sup> (7.5%) were designated at “no-take” state marine reserves.
- *September 21, 2007:* A kick-off event at Pont Lobos signaled the end of the CCSR planning process and the beginning of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phase for that study region. The adopted 29 CCSR MPAs went into effect on that day.

Type of MPA	Area (sq. miles) of MPAs in Central Coast State Waters	Percent of Central Coast State Waters
SMR	85.3	7.4%
SMP	6.4	0.6%
SMCA	112.2	9.8%
Total	203.9	17.7%

## **North Central Coast Study Region (NCCSR):**

- *February 22, 2007:* The Secretary for Resources announced the members of the NCCSR Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF).
- *March 19, 20, 21, 26 & 27, 2007:* A series of informational public workshops designed to serve as a general orientation to 1) increase public understating of the MLPA-

Initiative process and 2) solicit further participation were held in Gualala, San Rafael, Bodega Bay, Half Moon Bay and San Francisco respectively.

- *May 16, 2007:* The NCCSR Regional Stakeholder Group (NCCSRG) members were announced.
- *June 27, 2007* the NCCSR Science Advisory Team (SAT) members were announced.
- *November 20, 2007* the NCCSR Statewide Interests Group (SIG) members were announced.
- *December 6, 2007:* The following order for completion of the remaining three study regions: South Coast, North Coast and San Francisco Bay were announced by the Secretary for Resources. The expected completion date for all five study regions is around 2011.
- *February 4, 5 & 6, 2008:* The second round of public workshops designed to update the public on the MLPA process and current MPA proposals for the NCCSR were held in Petaluma, Gualala and Pacifica respectively.

Beginning in May 2007, the NCCSRG convened for a series of formal meetings and work sessions to develop MPA proposals for the NCCSR. The NCCSRG held eight formal meetings and three work sessions over ten months which resulted in the development of three final MPA proposals. These final three proposals drew from six original draft MPA proposals developed by three cross-interest NCCSRG work teams, plus four proposals from outside groups. The SAT and the Department of Fish and Game (Department) evaluated these initial proposals relative to how well they addressed scientific guidelines and followed Department feasibility criteria. Based on these evaluations, the BRTF directed the NCCSRG to modify their proposals accordingly and to reduce the number of proposals that would move forward for further evaluation to no more than five. In response to this direction, the six internal proposals were winnowed to four, two RSG proposals were combined with two of the external proposals, the third external proposal was retracted and the fourth external proposal was revised and resubmitted. After a second round of evaluations of the five draft proposals (four internal, one external), the BRTF directed the NCCSRG to return with no more than three final MPA proposals, with greater weight given to cross-interest proposals. Ultimately, the remaining external proposal was combined with one internal proposal (Proposal 2-XA), two internal proposals were combined (Proposal 1-3) and one internal proposal was retained and modified (Proposal 4) for a total of three final MPA proposals.

On March 19, 2008 the three NCCSRG MPA proposals were finalized by the RSG and were formally presented by the RSG to the BRTF on the first day of a joint BRTF meeting held April 22-23, 2008. After formal presentations of the RSG-generated MPA proposals were given, and public comment taken, the BRTF decided to forward all three RSG MPA proposals as well as a BRTF-generated recommendation for a preferred alternative to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission). The BRTF's preferred alternative was crafted by integrating proposals and ideas from all three RSG final proposals and is known as the

Integrated Preferred Alternative. The Commission is the final decision making body in the MLPA process and has the sole authority to adopt proposed MPAs after their own public process, which will commence after a joint BRTF/Commission meeting in late May 2008.

The following table shows the total percentage of state waters and the break-up by percentage of proposed no-take State Marine Reserves (SMRs), State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCAs) and State Marine Parks (SMPs) for each of the final three NCCRSRSG MPA proposals submitted to the BRTF, and the Integrated Preferred Alternative.

<b>MPA Proposal</b>	<b>Total Area (sq. miles) of all proposed MPAs</b>	<b>Proposed % of No-Take State Marine Reserves (SMR)</b>	<b>Proposed % of State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCA)</b>	<b>Proposed % of State Marine Parks (SMP)</b>
<b>Proposal1-3</b>	164.6	11.4%	10.1%	<0.1%
<b>Proposal 2-XA</b>	137.2	8.9%	9.0%	0.1%
<b>Proposal 4</b>	204.9	13.8%	12.7%	0.4%
<b>BRTF Integrated Preferred Alternative</b>	153.3	11.2%	8.4%	0.5%

### **South Coast Study Region (SCSR):**

Initial preparations in the south coast study region (SCSR), which extends from Point Conception south to the California/Mexico border, will begin summer 2008. The overall planning process will be similar to those of the CCSR and the NCCSR. Initial public informational workshops will be held, an RSG, SAT and BRTF will be announced. MPA proposals will continue to largely be the creation of the RSG, based upon scientific guidance from the SAT, policy guidance from the BRTF, feasibility guidance from the Department and overall support from MLPA-Initiative staff.